Sen Fan
Helen Fan
Narrators

Sarah Mason
Interviewer

December 1, 1979
The Fan Home
Morris, Minnesota

Asians in Minnesota Oral History Project
Minnesota Historical Society

Sarah Mason - **SM**
Sen Fan - **SF**
Helen Fan - **HF**

SM: I'm talking to Professor and Mrs. Sen Fan and Helen Fan in Morris, Minnesota, on December 1, 1979. And they've been here for quite a few years. And maybe we'll just start with one of you . . . maybe back in your early childhood.

SF: Early childhood, for mine?

SM: Yes.

SF: Yes. I was born in 1927 in a rural area in China, which is across the Yangtze River, across the Shanghai, the North side of the Yangtze River. And I was raised there until 1947. Yes, 1947. And then when I went to Shanghai, I stayed in Shanghai for about a year. It was in 1948, I went to . . .

HF: Taiwan.

SF: Taiwan.

SM: I see.

SF: With my sisters, brothers, and mother.

SM: Oh, I see. You were raised in the interior, you say, during the Sino-Japanese war?

SF: During the war.

SM: Yes.

SF: During the war, yes, right.

SM: I see.

SF: During the war. And I have quite a large family. I have three sisters, four brothers.

SM: Yes. Are any of them in the United States?

SF: I have two of them that are.

SM: Two . . .

SF: Two brothers. One is in . . . one older brother is near Washington, D.C., and another one in San Francisco.

SM: Oh. I see. Yes.

SF: And yes, and my childhood was during the war years. During the war years the older brothers and sisters were not at home. They were in the [unclear].

SM: Oh.

SF: Yes. Yes.

SM: Was that where you were too, in [unclear – Szechuan?]?

SF: I was in the Guangzhou. Guangzhou, yes.

SM: Oh, in Guangzhou, yes.

SF: Yes, [unclear] Guangzhou Province.

SM: Oh, I see. Yes.

SF: And so I went to Taiwan in 1948. And before I went to Taiwan, in fact, the [unclear] reason I went to Taiwan in 1948 was because of my illness.

SM: Illness?

SF: Yes. I was sick. I was sick.

SM: Oh. Hmmm.

SF: And so I went there because of my family.

SM: Oh.

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SF: And my brothers and sisters were there already, so I went there. And I stayed in Taiwan for exactly three years.

SM: I see. Yes.

SF: And I attended an undergraduate college [unclear] there. And after that I taught high school one year. And then I taught in a college for about four years.

SM: Was that at a college?

SF: That was in Southern Taiwan there, it's called Cheng Kung University. And the major responsibility at that time was as a so-called assistant in the math department: full time assistant, part time teaching.

SM: I see. You were teaching at college and assisting in the math department?

SF: Teaching mathematics.

SM: Teaching mathematics.

SF: Yes, teaching mathematics and the title was assistant.

SM: I see.

SF: [Unclear] an assistant.

SM: Yes. Like some [unclear].

SF: And the [unclear] were different than were here. Here there are assistant professors and associate professors. From there, I started as assistant.

SM: Oh, I see.

SF: And instructor, instead of an associate professor.

SM: I see.

SF: Yes.

SM: It wasn't like a teaching assistant, such as we have here, who are really graduate students.

SF: Yes, oh here, teaching assistant here is part time during graduate work.

SM: Yes. Right.

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SF: Down there, you know, no graduate school. So it was a full time, really, teaching.

SM: Yes. I see.

SF: And after a number of years you can be promoted.

SM: I see. Then you came here from Taiwan?

SF: No, then in 1958 and . . . well, 1958 we got married. And then in [unclear] and the whole family was . . .

HF: No, it was the two of us.

SF: Was only the two of us. [Chuckles]

[Unclear- multiple people speaking at once]

HF: [Unclear] haven't had a family yet. Not yet.

[Laughter]

SF: Oh, yes. We went to Singapore.

SM: Oh.

SF: Yes. Singapore, in Nanyang University.

SM: Isn't that where Chee went? Professor [Cheng Khee] Chee at Duluth? Did he go to Singapore?

SF: Yes, I've heard of it. Yes, I have.

SM: Oh, yes.

SF: And I spent there . . . we spent there for two years.

SM: You were teaching there?

SF: For teaching there, yes.

SM: Teaching mathematics?

SF: Mathematics. In fact, part time teaching, part time grading papers.

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SM: Oh.

SF: As . . . yes, assistant.

SM: Yes.

SF: Yes, assistant.

SM: Yes. I see. How did you happen to go there?

SF: Well . . .

SM: Was it just a job that was offered to you?

SF: A couple of my former professors went there first.

SM: Ah. Yes.

SF: Went there first.

SM: I see.

SF: And there was a group of people . . . and at that time Nanyang University was new.

SM: Oh. Yes.

SF: And they recruited there. And quite a number of people from Taiwan and also from Hong Kong came.

SM: I see. Yes. It started in 1958 or . . .?

SF: I believe, yes. It started around 1958.

HF: Well, perhaps a year earlier or two.

SF: Oh no, it started already in there already. I was there in 1958.

HF: Yes, earlier that was when you went. Yes.

SM: Yes, 1956.

SF: It started about . . . we'd had a little bit of difficulty and then since going because [unclear] political situations down there. If you have heard . . .

SM: Oh, yes.

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SF: Dr. Lin Yu-Tang [unclear].

SM: Yes.

SF: And he was the first president and he was there for oh, less than a year.

HF: [Unclear]. Less than a year.

SM: Wait, what his name? Ling?

SF: Lin.

HF: Lin.

SM: Oh. Yes.

SF: Lin.

SM: Excuse me, just a minute.

[Recording interruption]

SM: Okay. We were talking about Nanyang.

SF: Talking about Nanyang, yes. And I think the school was started, let's see, either 1956 or 1957.

SM: Yes.

SF: Yes.

SM: I see. I see. So they were recruiting in and all around Asia.

SF: Yes. I think a great majority of the [unclear] members were from Taiwan and Hong Kong.

SM: From Taiwan . . .

SF: And Hong Kong. So a couple of the former professors of mine recommended it.

SM: I see.

SF: To go there.

SM: Yes.

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SF: Yes.

SM: And so you both went then.

SF: And . . . yes, we both went. And we spent . . . we stayed there for two years . . . two years and then I decided to come over here to do some more study.

SM: Yes.

SF: That was the summer of 1960.

SM: I see. And where did you go here?

SF: I went to Illinois.

SM: Oh, University of Illinois?

SF: Yes, that's the Champaign-Urbana. Yes.

SM: Oh, Champaign. Oh.

HF: [Unclear] a jasmine tea.

SM: Oh, I'm....

[Recording interruption]

SM: And you stayed at the University of Illinois then . . .?

SF: Yes, I really . . . at that time my younger brother was there already.

SM: Oh.

SF: Yes. So [unclear] I stayed with him. And . . . I spent about . . . well, I think I spent nine month to finish my master's degree.

SM: Oh, in only nine months.

SF: [Chuckles]

SM: That's a record. [Chuckles] It seems.

SF: Well, I had [unclear] because before I came I sent Helen and Paul then back to Taiwan.

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SM: Oh, I see.

SF: Yes.

SM: So you had to hurry up.

SF: [Chuckles] Yes, hurry up.

SM: To get back to your family.

SF: To bring them back. [Chuckles]

SM: Yes. But why did you send her back? [Chuckles]

HF: I couldn't come to the United States at that time.

SF: She couldn't come anyway.

SM: Oh, I see.

SF: Because for . . .

HF: Because he came here as a student.

SM: Oh, I see.

HF: Yes.

SF: I came here as a student.

SM: As a student, I see.

SF: And then only on a student visa.

SM: Yes. They didn't take married students then?

SF: No, they cannot, they wouldn't [unclear]. I think the United States [unclear] limited [unclear].

SM: Yes.

SF: Yes.

SM: Yes. Well, did you get a grant of some kind from the University of Illinois or [unclear]?

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SF: No, the first half year I did not.

SM: I see.

SF: Because of my [unclear] with second half year and I got [unclear] small grant, tuition free.

SM: I see. Well, it helped a little, I guess.

SF: Yes.

SM: I see. So you were still in Taiwan.

HF: Yes.

SF: They were still in Taiwan. Right.

SM: Let's see, we're up to about what year? [Chuckles]

SF: Yes. That was . . . It was not . . . wait, I came here in 1960. Yes. This was August.

SM: 1960 you came . . .?

SF: August, came to . . .

[Unclear – everyone speaks at once]

SF: 1960 I came to Illinois.

HF: Illinois.

SM: I see.

SF: Then the next year . . .

HF: 1961.

SF: 1961 they came here.

SM: Oh.

SF: Yes.

SM: So that is really early then for Morris. [Chuckles]

SF: [Chuckles] Yes.

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SM: Oh.

SF: And I came here . . . and only other Oriental was Dr. Lee, Jooinn Lee.

SM: Oh, he was already here.

SF: He was . . . yes. He was in political science. Also from Illinois.

SM: Oh, did he give you the idea to come here?

SF: No, no. I didn't . . .

SM: No.

SF: I didn't meet . . . I [unclear].

SM: You hadn't met him.

SF: I did not meet him on campus until . . . well, I met him here. [Chuckles]

SM: I see. I see. Well, how did you happen to come to Morris? That's . . .

SF: Well, after I finished the degree and applied to several schools . . . At that time, that was during the early 1960s, it was not easy to get a job, I believe.

SM: Yes. Yes, that was [unclear].

SF: And my advisor really was very reluctant to let me go.

SM: Oh.

SF: He wanted me to stay.

SM: Yes.

SF: I said I could come back after our family came here.

SM: Oh, yes.

SF: And I had to get a job first and then get the family to come here and settled first.

SM: Yes.

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SF: And so I applied at least a few schools, and I got two or three offers. And two of them from this [unclear] and the [unclear] South.

SM: Oh, I see. So you didn't have trouble getting a job then.

SF: No, I did not. In fact, I didn't have, I remember that.

SM: And jobs were hard to get.

SF: But it was . . . it was my advisor's recommendation that we go to be in Minnesota.

SM: Oh, instead of the South.

SF: At that time this is part of the University of Minnesota, so for me he thought it would better than going South.

SM: Probably so, I would assume. [Chuckles]

SF: [Chuckles] Yes, so . . .

SM: [Unclear].

SF: So I followed their advice and came over here. [Chuckles]

SM: Yes. Did you ever go back to Illinois to [chuckles] satisfy your advisor or . . . you stayed here straight through since . . .?

SF: Well then after . . . after four years I did make efforts and tried to go back to do some . . . to do some more work.

SM: Yes.

SF: And I had a number of choices and Illinois was one. But because the issue was the time, you have to rush you know, it's short.

SM: Yes.

SF: Shortest at one time to . . .

SM: Oh, yes.

SF: To work towards a Ph.D. degree.

SM: Yes.

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SF: Finally I decided . . . I went to Brown University.

SM: Oh, you went to Brown. Yes.

SF: And then the whole family went to Brown.

SM: I see.

HF: [Unclear].

SF: And for two summers and one year, yes. It was a year. [According to the University of Minnesota Board of Regents April 9, 1965 Meeting Minutes, for the school year 1965-66 Sen Fan was granted an unpaid leave of absence from his assistant professor position at University of Minnesota-Morris to attend the NSF Academic Year Institute and its related summer program at Brown University.]

SM: Hmmm. And that's all it took to get your Ph.D. [Chuckles]

SF: Yes. [Unclear]

SM: [Unclear].

SF: 1965.

HF: Yes, 1965.

SF: 1965.

SM: Yes, 1965 you received it.

SF: Yes.

HF: Yes.

SM: And you went there in 1964 about?

SF: 1965.

SM: Oh, you went in 1965.

SF: We left there in 1966.

SM: I see.

SF: Yes. And I didn't finish a degree, I finished all the requirements.

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SM: Oh, I see.

SF: Except a thesis.

SM: Yes. I see.

SF: And I still don't have the degree yet.

SM: Oh. Yes.

SF: I'm not sure I'm going to make it. [Chuckles]

HF: [Chuckles]

SM: Once you start teaching, it's hard to get it.

SF: Yes. [Chuckles]

SM: Yes. I see.

SF: Yes. But as far as coursework . . . and I had a language requirement I didn't finish.

SM: Oh.

SF: [Unclear].

SM: Had you used Chinese? [Chuckles]

SF: [Unclear]. The worst problem, I cannot, and in Brown University, I cannot.

SM: Oh.

SF: And at Brown University I'm . . . at the time I went there, and they'd just changed their . . . changed the regulation involving language requirements.

SM: Oh.

SF: Before that, only the departments were giving the exam and then, you know, you just translate some articles, scientific article journals.

SM: Yes.

SF: And when I went there and they changed it, you have to be tested from some kind of test program given by Princeton University.

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SM: Oh.

SF: And you had to be very . . . not only just scientific language, you know, [unclear] French or German.

SM: Yes.

SF: And you have to know quite a bit. Even know their cultures and so . . . but I didn't try that.

SM: I see.

SF: Yes.

SM: You hadn't studied French or . . .

SF: No.

SM: Yes.

SF: At that time, no.

SM: It does seem a little unreasonable for a math [unclear].

SF: But there was no time during the year anyway. No time during then.

SM: Oh.

SF: Yes.

SM: But the university doesn't put pressure on you or . . .?

SF: No. Well . . . recently, yes.

SM: Oh.

SF: It has some pressure in terms of research. But not in the matter of a degree.

SM: Oh. Oh, I see. Well, that's better.

SF: In terms of research, yes.

SM: Yes. If you publish [unclear].

SF: [Unclear] get published and . . .

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SM: I see. Yes.

SF: Yes. The early part of the history of the UMM is that . . . and during the early years since the school started in 1960.

SM: Yes.

SF: Yes. And those days [unclear – somehow] we were emphasized on teaching.

SM: Oh, yes.

SF: You know, compared with research. Recently, I think, gradually we are more emphasized on research.

SM: I see. But that's decided locally here then rather than by the university regents or something like that?

SF: Ah . . . in terms of promotion, particularly promotion and its [unclear] decided. [unclear] campus.

SM: I see.

SF: [unclear] decision from graduate school.

SM: Oh. Oh, I see.

SF: Grad school.

SM: Yes.

SF: And I have the tenure.

SM: Oh, you do have tenure?

SF: Yes, I have tenure. I had . . . I received tenure in 1970 . . . 1968. 1968, yes.

SM: I see.

[Clunky noises]

SF: I'm now an associate professor.

SM: Thank you. I see.

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SF: Associate, yes.

SM: I see. Well that's . . . I mean it has nothing to do with the ethnic history but it's very . . .

SF: Yes.

SM: I didn't know they gave tenure, you know, without a degree, but involving . . .

SF: And on campus there are quite . . . quite a few.

SM: There are?

SF: Yes, quite a few people.

SM: Well, that's good. I'm glad you got that.

SF: Who are . . . who got tenure and finally promoted as associate professors without degrees.

SM: I see. Yes.

SF: And of course [unclear] a person without a degree, some of them just barely had a master's degree.

SM: Oh.

SF: And many of them, in fact, did substantial work beyond master's degree.

SM: Yes.

SF: And only a little bit left. Most had thesis work left.

SM: I see.

SF: Yes.

SM: But would they still give someone tenure without it? I see [unclear].

SF: Right, I don't know, it's much more . . . much more difficult, yes. Much more difficult.

SM: Now it's changed.

SF: But during those days and particularly . . . the first number of years when I was here, it was awfully difficult to recruit fine persons, people in the science area.

SM: Oh, I see. I see, yes.

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SF: Yes.

SM: Well, that was a help, I suppose.

SF: Yes.

SM: Well, just to go back briefly to your family. Wait, what was your father? What type of work did he do?

SF: My father was in those times . . . those days, I don't know how to translate . . . because it's not really the regular college.

SM: Yes.

SF: Not regular vocational school. It's somehow between [unclear] technical school between college and vocational school.

SM: Oh.

SF: That's after high school.

SM: Yes.

SF: And that's the level of college level. He was a civil engineer.

SM: He was [unclear]?

SF: Civil. Civil. Civil.

SM: Oh, he was a . . .

SF: Engineer.

SM: Civil engineer.

SF: Engineer, yes.

SM: I see.

SF: And but in a sense it's very different from today's civil engineers, that degree.

SM: Yes. I see.

SF: And mainly he was doing the surveying work.

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SM: Oh.

SF: Surveying work.

SM: Yes.

SF: Surveying the land and rivers.

SM: So it was the modern education [unclear].

SF: Yes. That was in the modern education.

SM: Yes. He . . . had he died when you went to Taiwan or didn't he go or . . .?

SF: He died during the war. The Indochinese War.

SM: He died during the war.

SF: At the age of fifty-six.

SM: Oh. I see. Well, maybe we should go from there to . . . to your background and then we'll catch up on the present. [Chuckles]

SF: Yes.

[Recording interruption]

SM: Could you tell us something about your background, Helen?

HF: Okay. I was born in 1931. I left there . . . [unclear] to live. [Chuckles]

SM: Where were you born [unclear]?

HF: [Unclear].

SM: [Unclear]?

HF: Yes. That's in Guangzhou Province, same as Sen.

SM: Oh, yes.

HF: Yes. And I left there . . . it would be 1948 . . . 1947 or 1948, somewhere there.

SM: Yes.

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HF: Yes. I went to Taiwan with my brother and sister.

SM: Without your parents though?

HF: My parents . . . well, my own mother, she died very early when I was four years old.

SM: Oh.

HF: So my father remarried after my mother's death two years later. So at that time I still have grandparents, a father, and a stepmother, and one half-sister in [unclear].

SM: I see.

HF: Yes.

SM: They stayed there then?

HF: They stayed there. They stayed there.

SM: That was a half-sister?

HF: Half-sister. Now I have two half-sisters there.

SM: Oh.

HF: Yes, for a while we couldn't communicate with each other, for many years.

SM: Oh, yes. Yes.

HF: Yes. Now my father is dead.

SM: But . . . and do you communicate with . . .?

[Unclear due to loud noises like something touching the microphone]

HF: I have a sister. Who is two years older than me. She was . . . she was [unclear] to my aunt because she never had . . .

[More noise interference]

HF: She was very young. She was adopted [unclear] this aunt. Now she's in Shanghai.

SM: Oh. And you're in touch with her?

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HF: Right. Right. Since we came here, we can write to each other.

SM: Oh.

HF: Yes.

SM: So when you make your trip, you can visit her.

HF: Right. Right. Yes.

SM: Oh, that's interesting.

HF: Yes. Now I went to Taiwan with my brother and sister and I went to a Normal School in Taiwan. So after that I taught . . . oh, how many years? Three years? Yes, three years of grade school.

SM: Yes.

HF: Then I met Sen; then we got married.

SM: I see. Did your father then support you while you were there or . . .?

HF: No. My . . . no. My brother was working.

SM: Oh, I see.

HF: Yes, in Taiwan.

SM: Yes.

HF: Yes, he was older than I am and my sister was older than I am. So they supported me.

SM: Yes. She was working, too?

HF: Yes.

SM: I see.

HF: Yes. And they're still in Taiwan right now.

SM: Oh, I see.

HF: Yes.

SM: So all your relatives are in Taiwan or China?

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HF: Well, China, I have one sister who lives in Shanghai and two half-sisters and a stepmother and an aunt in [unclear].

SM: I see.

HF: Yes.

SM: And then the two in Taiwan.

HF: Yes. My brother and sister are in Taiwan. Yes.

SM: I see. What kind of work was your father in, in China?

HF: Well, he was a sort of . . . in clerk work.

SM: I see.

HF: Yes.

SM: For the government or . . .?

HF: Oh, for the . . . [unclear – speaks in Chinese].

SF: A . . . a railroad station.

HF: See, Mandarin . . . Mandarin was . . . [Chuckles]

SM: Oh, for the railroad.

SF: Railroad.

HF: Yes. Yes.

SM: Oh. I see.

HF: Yes.

SM: In Guangzhou?

HF: In Guangzhou, yes in [unclear]. Yes.

SM: I see. Yes. I see.

HF: Yes.

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SM: So now we're up to where you are joined. [Chuckles]

HF: [Chuckles] Yes.

SF: [Chuckles]

SM: Maybe we could talk about Morris. Or have we left . . .? Well we . . . did we get you to Morris yet? [Chuckles]

HF: Not yet.

SM: Not yet, we didn't do that.

HF: Yes.

SF: [Chuckles]

HF: [Chuckles] Yes. Well, you knew all that when we got married we went to Singapore and were two years there.

SM: Yes. Yes.

HF: Then I came here with Paul. Paul was born in Singapore.

SM: I see.

HF: Yes.

SM: And what year?

HF: Came here or went back?

SM: Yes . . . oh, also what year was he born [unclear]?

HF: Oh, yes. He was born on New Year's Day, 1960.

SM: Yes.

HF: Yes. Then we went . . . we went back to Taiwan in 1960 . . . the summer. Yes, summer in there, 1960.

SM: Oh.

HF: Yes.

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SM: Oh, you went back to Taiwan from [unclear].

HF: Yes, from Singapore.

SF: From Singapore.

SM: From Singapore.

HF: Yes, from Singapore.

SM: I see.

HF: Yes. Then Paul and I came in 1961, very later, almost . . . yes, almost 1962, New Year's.

SF: It was New Years'. After Christmas.

HF: Yes, before . . . after Christmas, after 1961 Christmas.

SF: The 28th, I think.

HF: Hmmm?

SF: The 28th.

HF: The 28th?

SF: Yes.

HF: Yes, we only left that day.

SM: Oh.

HF: Yes.

SM: I see.

HF: Yes. I remember that day. We came to Morris from the train. That was Paul's birthday.

SM: Oh.

HF: Yes, 1962 New Year's Day. I remember that.

SM: How was he, just one?

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HF: He was two.

SM: Two.

HF: Yes. Yes, when he was here, only two.

SM: That was a nice present.

HF: [Chuckles] Then when we came here Paul was so . . . you know, afraid of him, because . . .

SM: Oh, he hadn't seen him yet . . . or . . .

SF: Well, I saw him.

SM: You saw him before you came.

SF: Yes.

HF: Yes.

SM: Yes.

SF: I hadn't seen him for . . . when we left we [unclear].

HF: Since that summer.

SM: Oh, yes.

HF: He was about seven months old. So, yes.

SF: Seven months.

SM: Oh, sure. So he couldn't remember.

HF: Yes. When he came . . .

SM: [Chuckles] He was afraid of . . .

HF: Right. He was afraid of him. [Chuckles] And he thought he's a stranger, he didn't want to go near to him.

SM: Oh. I suppose it didn't take long. [Chuckles]

HF: [Chuckles] No, it didn't take long.

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SM: But that is a very real thing among people who immigrate to another country. Often the children are separated for a while and the wife.

HF: Yes.

SM: Yes. Well, while we're on Paul . . . [Chuckles]

HF: Yes.

SM: What are some of your ideas about bringing up your children here in Morris? Are there some things you don't like about it or you do like about it or what do you hope for, for your children?

HF: Well, I think for us . . . well, because our background is different . . .

SM: Yes.

HF: We . . . it is difficult to . . . for the kids to adjust to the American lifestyle completely.

SM: Yes.

HF: For instance, well . . . like kid, they . . . here they work, you know, work and they pay for working even for their own parents like mowing the lawn, you know.

SM: Yes.

HF: Is that, you know, it's also ideas . . . I couldn't take right away. So . . .

SM: [Chuckles]

HF: When my kids work in the house or in the yard, I never thought I should pay them because we never . . . we didn't brought up in that way.

SM: Right.

HF: Yes.

SM: So . . . so you wouldn't pay your children [unclear].

HF: No.

SM: You don't think that's a good idea.

HF: No.

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SM: [Chuckles]

SF: [Chuckles]

HF: Yes, but if they go to a movie or something, we will, you know, give them money for them to go.

SM: You would give them spending money for it.

HF: Yes. They will have spending money, but they don't get paid to do the work in the house.

SM: Right. What about . . . do they work outside or are they too young?

HF: Later on they worked for neighbors like mowing the lawn.

SM: Oh. Yes.

HF: Yes, things like that.

SM: I see.

HF: Yes. Now that Grace working in Hardee's part time after school.

SM: Oh.

HF: She works there.

SM: Is that a department store?

HF: It's a quick stop, Hardees's . . .

SM: Oh.

HF: Yes, Hardee's . . . speed foods.

SM: Oh, quick foods.

HF: Yes.

SM: Yes. Right. I see. And they mow lawns?

HF: Mow lawns. And the summertime both Grace and Bob worked at the Dairy Queen.

SM: I see. Both of them?

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HF: Both of them. And then Paul worked there too when he came home for the summer.

SM: Oh, you have three children.

HF: Yes, I have three.

SM: [Chuckles] I see.

HF: Yes, Paul is the oldest one.

SM: Oh, yes. That's the one you came with.

HF: Yes, Paul is the oldest one. Yes. He's not home now.

SM: Yes.

HF: He's in college.

SM: Where does he go?

HF: He's in Saint Olaf, Northfield.

SM: Oh, I see.

HF: Yes. He's a sophomore.

SM: We used to live in Northfield.

HF: Oh.

SM: Just down the street from Saint Olaf. [Chuckles]

HF: Oh, yes.

SM: Yes, it's a very nice school.

HF: Right.

SM: Does he like it? Or he started there?

HF: He's a second year now.

SM: Oh, second year.

HF: Yes.

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SM: What does he . . .?

HF: He works very hard.

SM: Does he?

HF: And he's doing pretty good, getting good grades. Yes.

SM: Yes. What does he want to major in or has he decided?

HF: Yes. He . . . now his major is chemistry.

SM: Yes.

HF: But he would like to go to medical school after.

SM: Oh, would he?

HF: Yes. After he graduates from Saint Olaf.

SM: Yes. I see. They have good departments in the sciences, don't they?

HF: Right. Right.

SM: Yes. Well, it does seem like many Chinese go on to medical school. And how do you explain that? [Chuckles] Is it because the parents like the idea of a professional or . . .?

HF: Well, when Paul has . . . his idea to go to medical school, it was his own idea.

SM: Yes.

HF: Yes. And his . . . well, he thought he has the . . . he did good work in high school.

SM: Yes.

HF: Through all his high school years and he thought someday he could go to medical school so he decided he will go to medical school.

SM: So he wanted to for a long time. I see.

HF: Yes.

SM: Yes. Are there any other things that you worried a little about in bringing them up in Morris?

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HF: Ah . . .

SM: The schools?

HF: The schools . . . they are getting along fine with the kids.

SM: I see.

HF: They have friends. Of course, they . . . well . . . Sen and I often, you know, think about identity.

SM: Oh, yes.

HF: You know.

SF: [Chuckles]

HF: Because we think maybe the color is different from other kids and . . . we asked Paul and our other kids if they . . . there's any, you know, difficulty with other kids, but they don't seem to have. But I know that sometimes, you know, kids would say something.

SM: Oh, yes.

HF: That they felt it, you know, hurt their feelings.

SM: Yes. Did they tell you about it or were you just . . .?

HF: They . . . well, when they were young, they would say, oh, some kids, they called us, you know, Japanese, Chinese, or something, you know.

SM: Oh, yes.

HF: It's . . . their funny, make funny things. But they . . . well, they say now they don't . . . they don't hear much of those things.

SM: Yes.

HF: I think when kids grow older they don't . . .

SM: Yes, it's worse in the lower grades, I think.

HF: Yes. Right. Right.

SM: Were they the first Chinese children here?

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HF: Yes, they were.

SM: Oh, yes. Then it's harder, too, if they're the first one.

HF: Yes. Yes.

SM: But it's not a big problem in Morris, I suppose.

HF: It's not a big problem. Yes.

SM: Yes. What about how they identify themselves? Do they think of themselves as Americans or Chinese or both?

HF: Well . . . well, yes. Paul thinks he's more American. [Chuckles]

SM: He does? Yes. Does that worry you? [Chuckles]

HF: Well . . . well, not really.

SM: And the others, do they think that, too? Or . . .

HF: Well, the other day we were talking about . . . Grace was . . . well, she's . . . she's quite open.

SM: Is she?

SF: Grace is more open than Paul [unclear]. She talks a lot.

HF: Yes. She's more open. Yes. Yes.

SF: [Unclear]. I'm not sure they already identify themselves yet.

SM: Oh, right. It might be too early.

HF: Yes. Right.

SF: It might . . . they might think the . . . they might think now [unclear] American, Chinese, whatever.

SM: Yes.

SF: But perhaps, when time goes on, they might have some kind of problem. In fact, I have, to use an example, my two nephews in Washington. And I talked to them when they were in college.

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HF: Yes.

SF: They did not . . . Washington, that area of Washington, and they are living in [unclear] Maryland.

SM: Oh, yes.

SF: It's near that IBM, IBM company.

SM: Yes.

SF: And down there . . . there are lots of Chinese down there.

SM: Yes.

SF: And in fact, [unclear] it as here.

SM: Right.

SF: Their experience in college was that they went through quite a crisis.

SM: Oh.

SF: In terms of identity.

SM: Yes.

SF: And they did not feel that at all when they were in high school.

SM: Yes. That's about probably when it really peaks.

SF: When they get in college and they begin to think about those things. And we really have to wait and see. [Chuckles]

SM: Yes. Well, also, when they go to college, they may be in contact with more Asian Americans.

SF: That's . . . that's the type of [unclear].

SM: Or Asian [unclear].

SF: It's [unclear] with this kind of experience, and contact with more Asians from Hong Kong, Asians from Japan.

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SM: Right.

SF: Or Chinese who were born in this country and do not speak Chinese.

SM: Yes. And that's really a distinct group.

SF: Yes. Probably, yes.

SM: Because some of them have told me that they don't feel comfortable with the foreign students from China.

SF: That's right. Yes.

SM: Because they don't speak well and so on.

SF: Yes. Yes.

SM: And certainly that group is becoming very highly conscious now, the Asian Americans in this . . .

SF: Right. [Chuckles] Right.

SM: Well, I suppose it's good, because . . .

SF: And because they are called ABC, American born Chinese.

SM: Oh, yes. [Chuckles]

SF: ABC's. [Chuckles] So that's quite a group.

SM: Yes. They used to call us BIC, I think. Born in China. [Chuckles]

HF: [Chuckles]

SF: [Chuckles]

SM: All these initials, you know. [Chuckles] Well, I think the [unclear] mentioned that their son now is president of the Korean Student Association at Chicago.

SF: In Chicago, yes.

SM: University of Chicago. And growing up in Morris, he really didn't think very much about it, naturally. [Chuckles]

SF: Yes.

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SM: Yes. It's kind of interesting to know what will happen when they get . . . I don't know. Are there many Asian students in Saint Olaf? Probably some.

HF: Ah . . . not many. There's some.

SM: But not like the university probably.

HF: Oh. No. No. I know Wu's . . . Wu has three girls, and their oldest girl, Ellen . . .

SM: Oh.

HF: She's a freshman.

SM: Oh, she's at Saint Olaf, too.

HF: Yes, in Saint Olaf, too.

SM: I see.

HF: Yes. And Dr. Wu's youngest one, he's the same year as Paul.

SM: Oh, and he's there, too?

HF: Yes. Yes, he's there, too. So I know three of them.

SM: Oh, well that's . . .

HF: I think there's more, but I don't know . . .

SM: Yes, there must be.

HF: Yes.

SM: There must be . . . I know there are some from China.

HF: Yes. Right. There's that one assistant, she or he teaches Chinese.

SF: Chinese. Yes.

HF: Yes, Chinese in Saint Olaf. Came from Taiwan this year.

SM: Oh. Oh.

HF: I know last year when we brought Paul to Saint Olaf for orientation week or something . . .

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SM: Yes.

HF: They had the parents there. And then we met one girl. She just came from Taiwan. And she . . . she's teaching. She helps teach here.

SM: Oh. She's the conversation . . .?

HF: Yes.

SM: Oh.

HF: Teaches Chinese.

SM: I see.

HF: Yes.

SM: Does Merle Metcalf still teach Chinese there or . . .?

HF: Ah . . .

SM: When we lived there, he was teaching it.

HF: Oh.

SM: But there was a Chinese [unclear].

HF: They have Chinese course there.

SM: Yes. Right.

HF: Yes.

SM: Is Paul interested at all in taking that or . . .?

HF: Well, now he . . . he's not . . . [chuckles]

SF: [Chuckles]

SM: Not interested. [Chuckles]

HF: Not all that interested. But someday . . .

SM: Not yet, anyway.

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HF: We hope he will.

SM: Yes.

HF: But he's got a roommate. There's three boys that room together. He's got a roommate, and David is . . . he came from Japan this summer.

SM: Oh.

HF: And he has spent eighteen years or so in Japan.

SM: He's American?

HF: He's American.

SM: Yes.

HF: Yes. His father, I think, is a missionary.

SF: Yes.

SM: I see.

HF: Yes. And he . . .

SM: That might be interesting to see . . .

HF: Yes. He takes Chinese.

SM: Oh, *he* takes Chinese.

HF: Yes. So when he . . .

SM: [Chuckles]

HF: When David talks, you know, talk Chinese to Paul, Paul can understand.

SM: Yes.

HF: When he came home . . . well, we tried to use Chinese all the time with the kids.

SM: Yes.

HF: But sometimes it mixes up with the English words.

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SM: Yes, it gets hard to do.

HF: And they understand it.

SM: Oh. Yes.

HF: By the way, you know, we are talking about that. They just don't talk back in Chinese.

SM: Oh, yes.

HF: They use English.

SF: But I think there have been . . . they've . . . is part of it they haven't been able to, in terms of pronunciation.

HF: Right.

SM: Oh, I see.

HF: Right. Right.

SF: Yes.

SM: Yes. Does Paul read a little bit or . . .?

SF: No.

SM: No. [Chuckles]

SF: We tried very hard to get him to take Chinese classes. [Chuckles]

HF: Yes.

SM: But he wasn't interested?

SF: [Unclear].

HF: I . . .

SM: You mean when he was little or . . .?

HF: When he was little I taught . . . well, the three of them, I taught Chinese to them. And they . . . that was all around . . . it was in grade school.

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SM: Yes.

HF: Somehow, when they grow older they seem to lose their interest to learn it.

SM: Oh, they were interested in grade school then?

HF: Well, yes, I was saying that when they were younger, like in first grade, second grade, those years.

SM: Yes.

HF: When I taught them Chinese, they were eager to learn.

SM: Ah. Yes.

HF: But as they grow older, they somehow lose their interest. Or maybe because there's more activities and they have other things to . . .

SM: Yes.

HF: Involved to so . . .

SF: And it's hard to learn.

HF: Yes. And also . . .

SM: [Chuckles] Right.

HF: Yes.

SM: And teenagers want to decide their own interests.

HF: Right. Right.

SM: Yes, that's true.

SF: [Chuckles]

HF: But some characters . . . like we have Chinese newspaper and the Chinese magazines, they can recognize some characters.

SM: Yes. So some remains.

HF: Yes, some. Right.

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SM: Yes. I see. Maybe you want to say a little more of what you feel about bringing up children here?

SF: My experience here?

SM: Yes.

SF: Well, it's a little mixed feeling, really. Some of the value judgments are quite different between West and East. And I'm trying to take the middle road. And expose them to both experiences. And I really . . . I have been eager to try to get them to now . . . to learn more Oriental culture. And fortunately . . . and we have a teacher in the high school. And all three of them took [unclear] from him, from [unclear]. This Mr. [unclear] in high school.

SM: Oh. What does he teach?

SF: He teaches political science and English and . . .

HF: Social studies.

SM: Oh.

SF: But because [unclear] in the grades and from his special background, he assigned [unclear] books.

SM: Oh. Yes.

SF: In relation to Chinese culture. History and Asian history, the Chinese history.

HF: Some literature, too.

SM: Yes.

SF: Or even recent events in [unclear]. They read a lot.

SM: I see.

SF: They read a lot. Yes.

SM: I see. Well, that's fortunate.

SF: Yes. That's very fortunate. And in fact [unclear] they spent more time on reading those things than the science courses. They are interested in science, but they spent more time in high school . . .

SM: I see.

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HF: And [unclear].

HF: Because Mr. [unclear] he's a very good teacher there, and that he wants kids to work hard. So he assigns a lot of books for them to read at home.

SM: I see. He teaches sciences and . . .?
SF: No. He teaches [unclear] social science, social studies.

HF: Social sciences.

SM: Social science.

HF: Yes.

SM: Yes.

SF: Political science.

HF: And English, too.

SF: English, too.

SM: Oh, yes.

HF: Yes, English, too.

SF: And he has a Japanese wife.

SM: Oh. Maybe that has something to do with it.

HF: Right.

SF: Yes, that might have something to do with it. [Chuckles]

HF: Right.

SM: What is his name, Mickelby?

HF: Mechelke.

SF: Mechelke, yes. Hard . . . hard to spell.

HF: I don't know how to spell that.

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SM: I think the [unclear] mentioned him. At least they mentioned a teacher that their children benefited from in high school.

SF: Yes.

SM: McCulkey. So you're trying to take the middle road and have them get the best in . . .?

SF: Yes. [Unclear]. The [unclear] but the family system.

SM: Yes.

SF: And I'm really not sure of the old family system . . . the practice in China is a really good one.

SM: Yes.

SF: There are good parts of it, you know. Not entirely, because . . .

SM: Yes.

SF: The [unclear] even I was brought up . . . and although it's very tight and [unclear] family system . . . and in fact all the younger brothers . . . or I should say all the brothers of [unclear] were supported by the oldest brother, you know.

SM: Oh, yes.

SF: And financially. And that's . . . in one sense it's good. On the other hand, the parents [unclear] authoritarian [unclear] parents [unclear] oldest sister, oldest brother within the family makes younger ones more dependent, and makes children more dependent. And I found that in this country the parents' attitude to some extent towards . . . the parents' toward their children and respect the children's feelings and not as authoritarian as in our Oriental parents.

SM: Yes.

SF: And that makes the children more independent. More independent.

SM: Yes.

SF: But on the other hand, I still want to see that the younger generation still has a certain degree of respect for the older generation. And that sometimes seems to be missing in some families in this country.

SM: Oh. Yes, if you could get the best from both systems [chuckles] it would be . . .

SF: Yes. And also....

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[Recording interruption]

SF: ...because when they go out with all their friends they have and they have different [unclear] now. I worked for my parents today I receive how many dollars. And when they came back and then we have to explain to them and . . .

SM: So the sense of sharing . . . a certain mutual assistance [unclear] in the family.

SF: Mutual assistance, mutual sharing, mutual . . . you know.

SM: Yes. And that is missing, I think, in some degree here in this country. Although some families have that, too.

SF: Yes. Well, I think in rural areas. I think the rural areas have a lot of families [unclear].

SM: Yes. Yes. And I think the old Norwegian families, like you probably see around here.

SF: Yes.

HF: Yes.

SM: Is pretty . . . pretty strong. Yes.

SF: Yes. It's very [unclear]. Yes.

HF: Yes.

SM: But it's really hard to cope with the peer pressure, I know.

SF: Right.

HF: Yes, when we saw that *Little House on the Prairie* [television series] . . .

SM: Oh.

HF: We felt, you know, it's more . . . the family relationship is more to us, really.

SM: Oh, yes.

SF: [Chuckles]

HF: Yes. It's different from nowadays, the family.

SM: Yes. The old fashioned family.

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HF: Yes, old fashioned. Yes.

SM: Right. And the old fashioned family here had extended family, too. So it was a little closer to the traditional Chinese family.

HF: Yes. Right.

SM: Yes.

HF: I got [unclear] name here.

SM: Oh, thank you.

HF: Yes. This is . . .

SM: Oh, here . . .

HF: I need my glasses.

SM: [Chuckles]

HF: [Chuckles] Yes. Eugene Mechelke.

SM: Oh, M-E-C-H-E-L-K-E. I see.

HF: Yes. Right.

SM: Eugene. That's interesting. He must be one of the best teachers in the high school.

HF: He is.

SM: Yes.

HF: He is.

SM: Hmmm. What else was I going to ask you? [Chuckles]

[Brief recording interruption]

SM: When we were talking before about, you know, there are some other Chinese families in the area, although I suppose it's pretty hard to see them very frequently. I was wondering if maybe more of the community you socialize with or whatever is the university community? Or maybe other Asian families in Morris? Or . . .

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HF: What?

SM: Or a mixture? [Chuckles]

HF: Well . . . mostly associate with rest of the university people.

SM: Yes. I see.

HF: Yes.

SM: I see.

HF: I joined the Women's Club, Women's Association, and we . . . we meet every other Thursday to play bridge. [Chuckles]

SM: [Chuckles] I see.

SF: That's part of the Women's Association. That's [unclear].

HF: That's [unclear] to Women's Association, yes.

SF: Oh.

SM: [Chuckles] Oh, that's the University Women's Association?

HF: Yes. [Chuckles]

SF: University. She was a board member last year of the Women's Association.

SM: Oh.

HF: Yes, last two years. Yes. [Chuckles]

SM: Oh. The last two years beginning in 1978?

HF: Ah . . . yes, 1977-1978. Yes.

SM: Yes. Well, is [unclear] a member of that, too? Or I thought she [unclear].

HF: Yes, she's a member of that Women's Association also.

SM: Oh, yes. I see.

HF: Right. Right. We all belong to that.

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SF: Yes, [unclear]. Foreign . . . what do they call it?

HF: Well, they call . . .

SM: [Unclear]?

HF: They already have . . . what do they call it? A gourmet cook.

SM: Oh.

HF: Yes, gourmet cookery [unclear].

SF: [Unclear] do they have some [unclear].

HF: Yes. Yes.

SM: Is that part of the University Women's Association?

HF: Right.

SM: Oh, I see.

HF: Yes.

SM: So are the Asians the leading cooks? [Chuckles]

SF: [Chuckles]

HF: Well . . . [Chuckles] Well, last year we had international food . . . a tasting party.

SM: Oh. [Chuckles]

HF: I think my egg roll was the best.

SM: [Chuckles]

HF: Well, it went faster. [Chuckles]

SM: Oh, I'm sure it was.

HF: The first one gone. [Chuckles]

SM: I'm sure it was.

HF: [Chuckles]

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SM: But that's a lot of work to make those.

HF: Yes, that's a lot of work. Yes.

SM: Yes. Well, maybe you want to talk a little bit about the difference maybe from the way you were brought up by your mother and the way you're bringing up your children now. I'm sure it's very different. It has to be very different. [Chuckles] But . . . well, whatever your thoughts are on that.

HF: Well, I . . . I think . . . for me to my children, I tried to . . . like I said it before, I tried to use Chinese when I talked to them and when they were young I taught them Chinese, tried to have them remember at least, you know, to listen to it.

SM: Yes.

HF: Well, also I . . . I tried to . . . like Sen said it before. In the middle, you know, not as strict as when I was brought up under my parents. I tended to . . . they would come home and, you know, say so and so in their family, you know, how they . . . how do they treat the children. So I tried to . . . let them, you know . . .

SF: Have as much freedom as possible. [Chuckles]

HF: Yes, have as much of their freedom as possible. Have more than what I had. [Chuckles]

SM: Yes. That's a reasonable approach, I think.

HF: [Chuckles]

SF: [Chuckles]

SM: And you don't try to restrict their school extracurricular activities or . . .?

HF: No, I encourage them to . . . yes, to do that, to join it.

SM: Yes.

HF: Well, both Grace and Bob, these last couple years they were in school choir, you know. What else?

SF: Key Club.

HF: Key Club. And . . . oh, what else?

SF: [Unclear] in student council.

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HF: Student council, yes, she's a student council officer right now.

SM: This is Grace?

HF: This is Grace, yes. And Bob joined tennis.

SM: Oh.

HF: Yes.

SF: He joined drama, too. Drama, plays.

HF: Play.

SF: Yes.

HF: No, Grace did.

SF: Grace did.

HF: Grace did, yes. And he joined speech.

SM: Yes. I see their really into all this [unclear] thing.

HF: Right and they . . .

SF: We try to encourage them.

HF: Yes.

SM: Yes.

HF: Yes, and they like . . . once a year they have a math contest, regional math contest.

SM: Oh.

HF: They will all go and Bob is doing very well.

SM: Yes.

HF: He's got . . . every year he's gotten a plaque, first plaque. [Chuckles]

SM: Oh. Yes.

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HF: Yes.

SF: Sometimes I've heard from teachers [unclear] they are . . . Bob's teacher. And both . . . all three of them are doing so well in the . . . I'd say, at their school.

SM: Yes.

SF: And I was interested in whether then he has . . . they have some kind of pressure.

SM: Oh. [Sighs]

SF: And to the extent that I'm not sure how the other students respond, because one of his teachers told me that, well, oftentimes they ask questions and the other people don't like to answer.

SM: They don't like to answer?

SF: Yes, the other people were called upon. "Why don't you ask Bob?"

SM: [Laughter]

HF: [Chuckles]

SF: [Chuckles] [Unclear] what they fear [unclear] and they respond that way how . . . what was the feeling of the students, I don't know.

SM: Yes. That is an interesting thought. So if they can't answer they would often say, "Ask Bob." [Chuckles]

SF: Well, even if they can answer [unclear].

HF: Even if they could answer, they don't answer, they say, "Oh, just ask Bob." [Chuckles]

SM: Well, that's strange.

SF: I might . . . I'm just suspicious. I cannot say for sure. There may be [unclear] but some people seem kind of jealous [unclear].

SM: Yes. That could be.

SF: [Chuckles]

SM: But maybe not . . .

SF: But I don't know, maybe not.

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SM: Maybe not. But it is interesting . . .

SF: Or maybe just a . . . just a joke or [unclear].

HF: Teasing.

SF: Or teasing.

SM: Yes. Well, it is interesting since you bring that up, because that is the reputation that Chinese students have, as being very smart and people wonder why, you know. [Chuckles]

SF: It must have something to do with family background, I think.

SM: Oh, yes. I'm sure it does.

SF: I think with . . . well, at least it would push them, you know, not as hard as we were brought up, but we did . . .

SM: Yes.

SF: Somehow we thought this is part of their responsibility.

HF: They thought we expect them to do good work as a good student.

SF: It is [unclear] to work. Work hard.

HF: Yes.

SM: Well, is that a largely unspoken expectation? They just know that? Or do you talk about it or . . .?

HF: They just . . .

SM: They just know. [Chuckles]

HF: . . . have that [unclear] feeling. Yes.

SM: Yes. Well, that's really very helpful to, you know . . . I don't know how this would compare with . . . it's probably very similar to say Chinese professors at the U in the Twin Cities. Unless there's something a little different about a small town. Well, less contact with other Chinese, of course, but . . .

SF: I'm not quite familiar with the Chinese professors at the University of how they are.

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SM: Yes.

SF: Social [unclear].

SM: Yes.

SF: And I just imagine because the university is so big . . .

SM: Yes.

SF: And see when I was in Illinois, I knew quite a number of Chinese professors.

SM: Yes.

SF: And they were doing their research and teaching and really did not have too much social activity with their other faculty members.

SM: Oh, really?

SF: Yes. Of course, I was only with them for a year.

SM: Yes.

SF: And this small town, it's really rather isolated. But within the university, particularly the first number of years, and the whole university was like a family.

SM: Yes.

SF: And I was here, the first Chinese in Morris, and the action of the people in town, I remember, was just *so* friendly.

SM: The town, not the university?

SF: No, including the university.

SM: Both.

SF: Both.

SM: Oh.

SF: Both. And they were trying so . . . now trying everything positive be helpful.

SM: Yes.

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SF: In fact, at that time my language was really very bad. [Chuckles]

SM: Hmmm. So it was a really good reception.

SF: That's correct.

HF: Yes, very friendly.

SF: It was a very friendly reception.

SM: Oh, yes.

SF: And now after I finished the one year study at Brown University and we went to . . . we moved to Sioux City, Iowa for two years.

SM: Oh.

SF: And we came back.

SM: Yes. Was that a very large university?

SF: Down there it's about the same size as this one. A little bit bigger.

SM: About the same. Yes.

SF: Bigger than this one. It's a small liberal arts college.

SM: Is that the University of Iowa?

SF: No, Morningside.

HF: It was Morningside College.

SF: Morningside College [unclear] school.

SM: Morningside College. Oh. So that wouldn't be big at all.

SF: Yes. But that [unclear] was much older. That has a much older history.

SM: I see. About the size of this university.

SF: About the size of this university. And the average age of [unclear] was much older than Morris at that time.

SM: Oh. Maybe that made a difference.

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SF: That was [unclear]. Because in those days . . . and after a while, when I was there one year, and people here just wanted me to come back. I said I cannot, I have signed a second year contract.

SM: Oh.

SF: So come to me next time earlier. [Chuckles] So after two years I came back then.

SM: So this was a warmer kind of . . . not climate but warmer [chuckles] human . . .

SF: Yes. I think . . .

HF: Warmer heart. Yes.

SF: Yes, warmer.

SM: Warmer heart. Yes, that's interesting.

SF: Yes.

HF: Yes.

SM: Well, it really would be interesting to ask someone at the U in the Twin Cities whether they socialize with the general professors or more other Chinese.

SF: Yes. [Unclear] the early years and the small faculty and in fact they could [unclear] informally at homes, parties, general parties.

SM: Yes.

SF: Cocktail parties or whatever.

SM: That's here in Morris?

SF: In Morris with faculty members.

HF: In Morris.

SM: I see.

SF: But in the recent few years, and . . . oh, let's say five years or so.

SM: Yes.

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SF: The college got bigger.

SM: Oh, yes.

SF: Bigger than before.

SM: Right.

SF: And then . . . say like some of the faculty members in social science, you know, like I'll never heard names [unclear].

SM: Oh, yes. You can't . . . quite keep it . . .

SF: But still there are a group of people who usually get together, you know, from time to time.

SM: Yes. It sounds like sort of a unique situation here. [Chuckles]

SF: Yes.

SM: Kind of a nice little setting here. Hmmm. Well, I have interviewed one Chinese professor at the U. Maybe I should ask him about that. I was asking him . . . oh, he was there with the [unclear] that night.

SF: Yes.

HF: Yes.

SM: John was his name.

SF: John, yes.

SM: He's an entomologist.

SF: Yes.

HF: Hmmm.

SM: I was asking him about the early student association and he said that he didn't take too much part in it, because he was very busy with his studies and I guess he was quite a protégé of one professor. And so he . . . you know, associated more with him than with the Chinese students. But it would be interesting to know in general what kind of social interaction the university has. Maybe I'll ask him. But at Illinois you say there really wasn't a lot of interaction between them?

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SF: And during that year, yes, I . . . somehow, yes. My brother and I and . . . often [unclear] with the Asian other students or Chinese professors.

SM: Yes. I see. The students were . . .

SF: Yes. And what I [unclear] was this and . . . and probably have not . . . I did hear that now some Chinese professors or students have had a party with American professors or students.

SM: Yes. Yes. That's in recent time . . .?

SF: Oh, that was . . . 1960s.

SM: 1960s.

HF: 1960s, before he came . . .

SF: Yes, early 1960s. Yes, I was there only nine months, you know.

SM: Yes. But you probably would have heard about it if . . .

SF: You mean . . .

SM: If it was happening, don't you think?

SF: If it was happened I probably would have heard about it.

SM: I think so, too.

SF: [Unclear] yes.

SM: That was the early 1960s, do you think?

SF: That's from 1960 to 1961.

SM: Oh, 1960 to 1961.

SF: Yes.

SM: So it was really before the big movements for . . . changing society. [Chuckles]

SF: Right. Right.

SM: Were starting. Yes.

SF: Right. Yes.

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SM: I see. That's interesting.

SF: And the university was so big, see. For the nine months I was there, I never saw the department chair, you know.

SM: Oh! [Chuckles]

SF: I know the name, I never saw him.

SM: Oh . . .

SF: Yes. [Chuckles] They have an executive secretary, I saw him.

SM: Ah.

SF: [Chuckles]

SM: That's something. [Chuckles]

HF: Small town is different from that bigger city.

SM: Yes. Yes, it really is. And a smaller university is different from a big one, I suppose, too.

HF: Yes. Yes.

SM: I did get the impression from some of those who were students in the late 1930s and the 1940s . . .

SF: Hmmm.

SM: Oh, see, I did talk to another one about that, too. And he said that at the Saint Paul campus especially in agriculture, there were two departments that had many Chinese students, and they were great favorites of the professors.

SF: Yes.

SM: And the professors—these were not Chinese professors, although now there are quite a few Chinese professors there—but that those professors did invite their Chinese students very often to their homes. So it was a sort of intimate kind of relationship.

SF: Yes.

HF: Yes.

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SM: But I suppose that's bigger now, too. And I don't know . . .

SF: Hmmm.

SM: There are many Asians . . . it is . . . entomology and plant pathology were the two.

SF: Yes. Right.

SM: Apparently, many Chinese students studied there and went back both to the mainland and to Taiwan and they were instrumental in collectivizing agriculture there.

SF: Yes. Yes. Right.

SM: It's interesting that the U played such a role in that.

SF: Yes.

SM: Well, is there something else we should have talked about? [Chuckles] Or that you would like to talk about?

HF: Well, I can't think of . . . unless you have questions to ask. [Chuckles]

SM: I wrote down some questions, now I'll look at them. [Chuckles] Oh, well, maybe I could ask you a little bit about the difference in family structure. You know, the role of husband and wife and children to parents. I guess you did talk a little bit about children to parents and so on. You know, whether there's a little less authoritarianism by age and sex than in the traditional family.

HF: Yes.

SM: Due to being in the new environment or . . . I mean, it changed in China, too, in modern times, of course.

HF: Yes.

SF: Yes.

SM: So it gets complicated. But I guess anything that you could see as sort of an adaptation to Minnesota environment would be kind of interesting.

HF: Well . . .

SM: Well, you did talk a little bit about giving the children more freedom though.

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HF: Yes. Yes. Well, like Sen and I are . . . well, most of the big decisions we would always, you know, consult to each other.

SM: Yes.

HF: Yes.

SM: And then it would be divided . . . I mean, decided on a sort of consensus basis?

HF: Yes. Yes.

SM: And then . . . let's see . . . well, I guess you did talk about the children. Do they enter into decision making somewhat or . . .?

SF: In terms of family decisions, [unclear] decisions?

SM: Yes, family or . . . or say their own education maybe, like going to college and that kind of . . .

SF: Oh. Yes. The going to college [unclear] since . . . Helen and I had taken the attitude that in the advisory capacity to our boys, consult them. Finding a decision will be theirs, really.

SM: Yes.

SF: In terms of major, in terms of which school. And I always provide that information about what kind of schools are strong in which area.

SM: Yes.

SF: And whatever they want now, any information or any advice they want, I won't hesitate to tell them. I think that way.

SM: Yes, and you have . . .

SF: Because the decision is yours.

SM: Yes.

SF: The decision's yours.

SM: Yes.

SF: Particularly . . . for like Paul, you know, he got admission both from Carleton and Saint Olaf.

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SM: Did he? I see.

SF: [Unclear]. And I was trying to really try and compare both schools and both programs, and [unclear] project in the future of four years later. And analyze it from my point of view and to let him make the decision.

SM: Yes. I see.

SF: And he also consulted with his teachers at school.

SM: Sure.

SF: Yes.

SM: And you're certainly in a position to know, you know, something about different colleges around the state.

SF: Yes. Yes.

SM: Yes. How did he happen to choose Saint Olaf? I'm interested. [Chuckles] For the science departments or . . .?

SF: Well . . .

HF: He went to both Saint Olaf and Carleton to interview there.

SM: Yes.

HF: At the schools. And . . .

SF: First of all, he's really interested in medicine.

SM: Oh, is that stronger at Saint Olaf?

SF: No, not necessarily.

SM: Oh. Yes.

SF: And in fact we were considering . . . he was considering possibly going out of state, going to one of the other states.

SM: Yes.

SF: And now Minnesota has a . . . Minneapolis has a very good medical school down there. So perhaps then and he should maybe [unclear] going to school within Minnesota.

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SM: Yes. It would reduce the cost considerably.

SF: Yes, reduce the cost. And . . . Paul and two friends of his [unclear] both schools.

SM: Yes.

SF: The schools. And the physical appearance of both schools [unclear] surrounding are much more beautiful [unclear] and campus is beautiful at Carleton.

SM: Yes. Yes. Right.

SF: And somehow their similar [unclear] of the school that students down there look their age and he got the same impression, that Carleton is a school . . . just study and nothing else. [Unclear]. [Chuckles]

SM: Well, it is a harder school. Yes.

SF: It's a harder school alright, but somehow he got the impression of [unclear] or from these . . . the comments made by some people.

HF: I think from the visit. When they went there, that was during NEA [?] week.

SF: Yes.

SM: Oh.

HF: He went there with the other two kids and Carleton was having testers coming so . . .

SM: Oh.

HF: When he went there, he saw all the people were studying.

SF: [Chuckles]

SM: It was pretty tense.

HF: And no one was on the tennis court. [Chuckles]

SF: [Chuckles]

SM: That's true.

HF: He plays tennis. And then he said no one was on the tennis court, everybody was studying. [Chuckles]

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SM: That's very true . . .

HF: Yes, he felt this and all of it was . . . different.

SM: Yes.

HF: Different. And also, I think because there were three other boys who were going to Saint Olaf . . .

SM: Oh, that would make a difference, too.

HF: Yes, same year. And that could, you know, make his . . .

SM: Yes. I think there is more of a kind of tension at Carleton.

HF: Yes.

SM: But it's also a very good school.

HF: It's a very good school.

SM: Yes. Well, thank you very much. I hope I haven't worn you out! [Chuckles]

HF: Oh, no. [Chuckles]

SF: You're welcome. Any other specific questions or . . .?

SM: As soon as I get back to the Twin Cities I'll probably think of all the things I should have asked you but . . . in any case, maybe I can call you sometime?

SF: Sure. Yes.

SM: You know, when I start to write, then that's when the questions start arising.

SF: Yes.

HF: Yes.

SM: And we do have a watts line so that during the working day we can call pretty easily. Sometimes it's overloaded [chuckles] and we can't get through because it's the same on the states system. But . . . I've certainly learned a lot today. So is there anything else you can think of? I think we're probably spent for this afternoon. [Chuckles]

HF: [Chuckles]

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SF: [Chuckles]

HF: I still have problems with English sometimes.

SM: Oh, I think . . .

SF: Well, and I have this problem, too. [Chuckles]

HF: Yes. I can't explain that well.

SM: Well, maybe you feel it, but you sound very [chuckles] articulate.

HF: Oh. [Chuckles]

SF: I . . . excuse me. I had the high school education during the war period.

SM: Oh, yes.

SF: And high school in those days, you know, and . . . I had a really difficult time even to get textbooks and get teachers.

SM: Yes.

SF: Or in fact we had a lot of English in our courses during . . . in high school. But always were taught by a person who in my view was not qualified, you know.

SM: Yes.

SF: In terms of [unclear].

SM: There was a shortage, I suppose, during the war.

SF: Yes, a couple years we were taught by a German father in the Catholic Church.

SM: Oh.

SF: And his accent was so heavy . . .

SM: Oh. [Chuckles]

SF: [Laughter] And once we were . . . I was taught a rather incorrect very accent, very incorrect pronunciation.

SM: Yes. I'm sure that happens a lot.

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SF: And it's very difficult to . . . to change.

HF: And also when you learn English from school you don't practice at home.

SM: Right.

SF: [Chuckles]

HF: Yes. That makes a difference. So when I came here, the first couple years I hardly opened my mouth. [Chuckles]

SM: Oh. [Chuckles] Did you just stay at home then or . . .?

HF: Yes.

SM: Well, you had small children anyway.

HF: Yes, I had Paul. But the wives from, you know, the faculty wives, they came to see me.

SF: Oh, yes.

SM: Oh, they came over to see you?

HF: Very friendly. They tried to . . .

SF: They [unclear] wife came to teach her. [Chuckles]

SM: How nice.

HF: Right. And they wanted to teach me English and very friendly, very nice.

SM: Well, that's interesting.

HF: Yes.

SF: Yes.

SM: And they came over and brought their children or . . .?

SF: Oh, they knew, you know, how hard on her [unclear] she came and then, you know, cannot speak English and at home and . . .

SM: Sure.

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SF: And they tried to [unclear] you know, [unclear] her very open and teach her.

HF: And they [unclear] . . . the coffee, you know, to their homes. Coffee.

SM: Oh, that's a good place to learn English.

SF: [Chuckles]

HF: Yes. Right. Right. Then I would bring Paul with me and go to coffee.

SM: Yes.

HF: Yes.

SM: Well, it does seem like a rather good environment here.

HF: It is. Yes. The neighbors are very friendly, too, like we have a potluck dinner around Christmas time every year.

SM: Oh, for this neighborhood then?

HF: Just this neighborhood, yes.

SM: At Christmas time.

HF: Yes.

SM: So you have a chance to meet the people in the town that aren't connected with the university, too.

HF: Oh, yes.

SM: Yes.

HF: Yes, with other people.

SF: [Unclear]. Say for instance one of the . . . the secretaries in the science division.

SM: Yes.

SF: And her husband died a couple years ago. Her husband was a businessman here.

SM: I see.

SF: And she'll often now have parties and invite somehow some people.

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SM: Oh. Yes.

HF: From town.

SF: People from town.

HF: Yes.

SF: And we join with them.

SM: I see.

SF: Yes. And so is the provost. The provost's office has a number of parties every year.

SM: I see.

SF: Inviting different people.

HF: Yes.

SM: So it really isn't a complete separation.

HF: No.

SF: We [unclear]. Yes.

HF: Yes. Yes.

SM: That's good.

HF: Because it's a small town, not all that big, so we know most of the people.

SM: Oh.

HF: We know most people, yes.

SM: I see. Well, that's remarkable.

HF: Yes. I go volunteer works like Meals on Wheels, you know, that . . .

SM: Oh, do you?

HF: Yes. Delivering meals and like Bloodmobile, when they come, then I go just to help.

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SM: I see.

HF: Just to do volunteer works. I usually go with next door, Catherine.

SM: Yes.

HF: Yes, she goes to volunteer work, too.

SM: I see. Well, the [unclear] said pretty much the same thing on that.

HF: Yes.

SF: Yes.

SM: That, you know, the townspeople and the university get along.

HF: Yes. They go to church. They probably know more people than us.

SM: Oh, yes.

HF: We don't go to church. Yes.

SM: I guess especially Pat is active in . . .

HF: Yes.

SF: Pat is very active.

HF: Yes, she's active in church activities. Yes.

SM: Yes. She went to that very famous Methodist university [unclear].

HF: [Unclear] yes.

SM: Yes. It was a big influence on her.

HF: Yes. Yes.

SM: Any more ideas? [Chuckles] Well, thank you very much. I think it's a really interesting interview.

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